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## Telephone Assistance for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

**Q**uestion: I've heard special telephones are available from the state for seniors who have trouble hearing. Is that true?

**A**nswer: The state does offer programs that can help individuals who are hard of hearing communicate more easily via telephone. State citizens of all ages can qualify, but many people who have hearing loss related to aging could benefit from these programs.

The South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind and the State Office of Regulatory Staff administer the South Carolina Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP). This program provides telecommunications equipment free of charge to South Carolina residents with qualifying disabilities. According to the information on the TEDP Web page "<http://www.scsdb.k12.sc.us/outreach/TEDP.htm>" [www.scsdb.k12.sc.us/outreach/TEDP.htm](http://www.scsdb.k12.sc.us/outreach/TEDP.htm), help is readily available to South Carolina residents who need this assistance.

Individuals who are



experiencing difficulty using their current telephone equipment are encouraged to apply to receive assistive equipment through the South Carolina Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (SC TEDP). This program provides telecommunications equipment at no cost to South Carolina residents with qualifying hearing, speech, blind/low vision with hearing loss, or dual sensory disabilities. The program provides a wide range of equipment. Some examples of the equipment include amplified telephones, TTYs (teletype phones), artificial larynx and alerting devices. Training and equipment installation is provided at no charge. State residents who have phone service in their home and a certified disability that causes difficulty using a standard telephone can qualify for

the program. A professional must certify that the individual can benefit from special telephone equipment.

For an application and more information, contact:  
SC TEDP Director

South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind, Midlands Regional Outreach Center

101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 120, Saluda Building, Columbia, SC 29210

Local: (803) 896-8337;  
Voice - (803) 896-8334  
TTY

Toll Free: 1-877-225-8337; Voice - 1-877-889-8337 TTY - Fax: 803-896-8345

E-mail:  
SCTEDP@scsdb.k12.sc.us  
SCTEDP@scsdb.k12.sc.us

*Aging Issues and Answers is a series of bi-monthly columns answering common questions posed to staff in the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging. Contact the State Office at 1-800-868-0995 or via e-mail at "mailto:askus@aging.sc.gov" askus@aging.sc.gov. Your question may appear in a future edition of Aging Issues and Answers.*